

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A video system comprising:
a screen for displaying visual information; and
said video system containing one or more templates, wherein said one or more templates are received from an external source,
each template comprising a non-overlapping set of active regions of the screen, and further wherein an individual active region may be individually activated or deactivated,
whereby when said templates are not activated, said visual information can be seen by a viewer, and when one of said templates is activated, said visual information can still be seen by said viewer.
2. (Original) Video system of claim 1 wherein said active regions invoke links to a data source.
3. (Original) Video system of claim 1 wherein said active regions initiate application software.
4. (Original) Video system of claim 1 wherein said screen displays a cursor, said system further comprising a control device for manipulating the position of the cursor to thereby select one of the active regions.
5. (Currently Amended) A video system comprising:
a screen for displaying visual information; and

a memory for storing information corresponding to a template, wherein said template is received from an external source and said template establishing a set of regions on the screen as active regions, wherein said template may be selectively activated or deactivated, whereby activating said template does not substantially prevent a viewer from viewing the visual information that was on said screen prior to activating said template.

6. (Original) System of claim 5 wherein said active regions are used for invoking links.
7. (Original) System of claim 5 wherein said video system displays a first image, said first image being annotated such that a set of active areas are associated with said first image, and wherein when said template is activated, the active areas associated with said first image located at said set of regions are masked.
8. (Original) System of claim 5 wherein said video system displays a first image, said first image being annotated such that a set of active areas are associated with said first image, and wherein when one of said template is activated, active areas associated with said first image are all masked.
9. (Original) System of claim 7 wherein said first image is a video image.
10. (Original) System of claim 7 wherein said first image is a web page and said active areas associated with said first image comprise hyperlinks.
11. (Original) System of claim 7 wherein said first image is a still image.
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) System of claim 7 further comprising a control device for selectively making ~~the~~ at least one individual active ~~regions~~ region of the template visible or invisible, but wherein said active regions remain active when they are invisible.
17. (Original) System of claim 5 wherein the template comprises a security feature for denying or permitting access to additional information, wherein said access is obtained by clicking on a predetermined sequence of the active regions of the template.
18. (Original) System of claim 17 wherein said additional information comprises a web page.
19. (Original) System of claim 17 wherein said additional information is a video program.
20. (Currently Amended) System of claim 5 wherein said ~~template~~ templates and visual information are provided by the same source.
21. (Original) System of claim 20 wherein said visual information is video information.
22. (Original) System of claim 21 wherein the template and video information are provided by an antenna, a memory device, an optical fiber, a cable TV source or the internet.
23. (Currently Amended) Method comprising:

displaying a first image on a display device, said display device being part of a display system; and

activating a first template over said first image wherein said first template is received from an external source and stored in a memory of said display system, said first template comprising a set of active areas associated with links wherein a user of said display system

individually activates or deactivates each active region from said set of active regions,

whereby said links can be activated by selecting one of said active areas, and wherein said first image is visible both before and after said activating of said first template.

24. (Original) Method of claim 23 further comprising the act of invoking one of said links, said act of invoking comprising moving a cursor to one of said active areas associated with said link.

25. (Original) Method of claim 23 wherein said first image corresponds to a web page comprising hyperlinks, wherein when said template is established over said first image, at least some of said hyperlinks are underneath and masked by the active areas of said template.

26. (Original) Method of claim 23 wherein said image is a video image annotated with active regions, and wherein when said template is established over said first image, at least some of said active regions are underneath and masked by the active areas of said template.

27. (Original) Method of claim 23 further comprising activating a second template over said first template, the active regions of said second template extending over at least some of the active regions of the first template, whereby the portions of the active regions of the first template that are covered by said second template are rendered inactive.

28. (Original) Method of claim 23 further comprising entering data into the system, said data being entered by selecting the different active regions of said template.
29. (Original) Method of claim 23 further comprising entering a security password into the system, said password being entered by selecting different active regions of said template.
30. (Original) Method of claim 23 wherein said template and said image are provided by the same content provider.
31. (Original) Method of claim 30 wherein said template and said image are provided from a single signal source.
32. (Currently Amended) A method comprising the steps of
providing a visual image and at least two templates, each template providing template
information to a display system, said template information comprising the location of active
areas to be established on a display screen and links to be associated with said active areas,
and further wherein each active area is activated or deactivated by said user, whereby said
template can be made active or inactive without preventing access to said visual image.
33. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein said visual information is video information.
34. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein said providing of said visual image and said
template comprises broadcasting said visual image and said template to a plurality of display
systems.

35. (Withdrawn) Method of claim 32 further comprising providing a plurality of templates to said display system.
36. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein said visual image and said template are provided from a memory device.
37. (Original) Method of claim 36 wherein said memory device comprises an optical disk, a magneto-optic disk, a magnetic disk or magnetic tape.
38. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein at least one of said links is a link to a web page.
39. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein at least one of said links is a link to a memory location.
40. (Original) Method of claim 32 wherein said display system is coupled to a telephone line and at least one of said links causes said display to initiate a telephone call.
41. (Previously Added) System of claim 1 wherein activation of one of said templates does not substantially modify the image appearing on those portions of said screen outside of said non-overlapping set of active regions of the screen.

42. (Previously Added) System of claim 1 wherein said video system contains a plurality of templates, said system comprising memory locations for storing the locations of the active regions of said templates and memory locations for storing links associated with said active regions.

43. (Previously Added) System of claim 1 wherein said active regions depict icons, alphanumeric information, thumbnail still images or video images.

44. (Previously Added) System of claim 5 wherein activation of said template does not substantially modify the image appearing on those portions of the screen outside said active regions.

45. (Currently Amended) System of claim 44 wherein said active regions ~~are~~ depict icons, alphanumeric information, thumbnail still images or video images.

46. (Previously Added) Method of claim 23 wherein activation of said first template does not substantially modify the image appearing on those portions of the display device outside said active areas.

47. (Previously Added) System of claim 46 wherein said active areas depict icons, alphanumeric information, thumbnail still images or video images.

48. (Currently Amended) A video system comprising:
a screen for displaying visual information; and

said video system containing one or more templates, each template comprising a non-overlapping set of active regions of the screen wherein said user manually defines information associated with said active regions, activation of said one or more templates affecting substantially only said non-overlapping set of active regions of said screen.

49. (Previously Added) System of claim 48 wherein when one of said one or more templates is active, said active regions are not visible to the user.

50. (Previously Added) System of claim 48 wherein when one of said one or more templates is active, said active regions are visible to the user.

51. (Currently Amended) A video system comprising:
a screen for displaying visual information; and
a memory for storing information corresponding to a template wherein said template is activated by a source external to said system, said template establishing a set of regions on the surface of said screen as active regions wherein individual active regions of the template may be selectively activated, whereby said template, when activated, substantially affects only said set of active regions of said screen.

52. (Original) System of claim 51 wherein when said template is active, said active regions are not visible to the user.

53. (Original) System of claim 51 wherein when said template is active, said active regions are visible to the user.

54. (Currently Amended) Method comprising:

displaying a first image on a display device, said display device being part of a display system; and

activating a template over said first image from a source external to said display system, said template comprising a set of active areas associated with links, said template affecting substantially only said set of active areas wherein said active areas are activated or deactivated by a user, whereby said links can be activated by selecting one of said active areas.

55. (Previously Added) Method of claim 54 wherein when said template is activated, said active areas are not visible.

56. (Previously Added) Method of claim 54 wherein when said template is activated, said active areas are visible.

57. (Currently Amended) A method comprising the steps of providing a visual image and at least two templates, each template providing information to a display system, said template information comprising the location of active areas to be established on a display screen and links to be associated with said active areas

wherein one of said templates is activated by a source external to said video system and the other template is activated by a user and further wherein the active areas of said templates are activated or deactivated by said user, whereby said template affects substantially only said active areas.

58. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 57 wherein when one of said ~~template~~ templates is activated, said active areas are not visible.

59. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 57 wherein when one of said ~~template~~ templates is activated, said active areas are visible.

60. (Previously Added) System of claim 1 wherein when one of said templates is activate, said active regions are invisible.

61. (Previously Added) Method of claim 23 wherein when said template is activated, said active areas are invisible.